

"I struggle to put into words the sense of shame this has brought our profession. It is a disgrace, a scandal, and the biggest public health issue of our time, an iatrogenic infection harming millions."

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The medical untouchables

I was on the TV and radio news recently. I have no media training nor a PA to help me. I don't enjoy it; I always mumble and speak too quickly. My kids don't help by saying, 'Who's that hideous middle-aged man on the telly?' But I don't care, because the topic is so important. A petition was recently sent to the Scottish Parliament to highlight the harm caused by prescription drugs¹ — a topic I have been droning on about for decades. With a tripling of the use of antidepressants and painkillers in a decade, which are causing widespread dependence and addiction,^{2,3} this is a huge public health issue but no one seems to care. The great and good are just desperate political wannabes, busy posturing and having completely lost sight of their real job as doctors. It's little wonder there is a wide schism between the GP elites and the *Pulse*-reading proletariat.

And where are the doctors supporting this petition? But, more importantly, where are those specialists who have repeatedly berated GPs for under-diagnosis and under-treatment of conditions like depression and pain? In the US, prescription drug deaths are truly epidemic, with more deaths in the period of 1999 to 2014 than from car crashes and guns.⁴ There are tens of thousands of people every year dying unnecessarily worldwide due to the drugs being prescribed by doctors. We have a similar issue in the UK too, but it is slightly more hidden.^{5,6} How did this happen? The original pharmaceutical research was manipulated with soft, illegitimate end points and tiny periods of follow-up. Medical 'experts' in the pockets of Big Pharma⁷ and Pharma hosed cash into fake patient advocacy groups that helped distort and magnify 'suffering'.^{8,9} This effectively shut down any debate, as dissenters were fearful of being accused of being dismissive of suffering. Welcome to today's new era of liberal authoritarian medical political correctness.

In any other industry there would be howls for a public inquiry, a criminal investigation, and corporate manslaughter charges. The irony is there is a whole criminal justice system seeking to control

illegal drugs with thousands of the poor imprisoned for decades for involvement in the drug trade. Yet, the professional architects of this medical mayhem walk away with their reputations intact and with bags of Pharma cash. I struggle to put into words the sense of shame this has brought our profession. It is a disgrace, a scandal, and the biggest public health issue of our time, an iatrogenic infection harming millions.

What is happening is wrong and wholly preventable. There is a need for a public inquiry and an urgent need to stem the relentless rise of dependence-forming medications in the UK. In the US, a few minor medical figures have been arrested¹⁰ but it would be better if the corrupt medical specialists were all led away in orange jumpsuits.

So I will happily continue to suffer the pain of being on the telly, if it means patients no longer have to petition against the harm caused by our medications.

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